

A Plain and Familiar
DISCOURSE
BY WAY OF
DIALOGUE
BETWIXT A
MINISTER and his PARISHIONER,
Concerning the
Catholick Church.

IN THREE PARTS.

- I. Shewing what's the Nature of the Catholick Church.
 - II. That the Church of *Rome* is not the Catholick Church.
 - III. That the Scriptures, and not the Church, are the Rule of Faith.
-

Which may serve as an Answer to some late Tracts upon that Argument.

By Dr Samuel Johnson.

By a Divine of the Church of *England.*

L O N D O N:

Printed for R. Clavel, and B. Tooke, at the Peacock, and
at the Ship, in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1687.

2011-12-11

1950-1951

1943

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

TO THE
READER.

READER,

THE Design of this Tract is to furnish thee with Answers to the many Captious Questions of the Romanists, concerning the Church. Hence thou wilt be enabled to shew them where our Religion was before Luther, and our Church before Henry the 8th. Here thou wilt see the Church of England vindicated from Novelty and Schism; the Church of Rome condemn'd for Usurpation and Tyranny; That the Traditions of that Church are spurious, and its Infallibility not to be trusted; But that being in the communion of the Church of England, thou art in a safe bottom; and that having the Scripture for thy Rule, thou hast a sure Guide. I have made it short, that it might not be chargeable; and in the way of Dialogue, that it might be easie. If thou reapest any benefit by it, blest God, and pray for the Author.

Farewel.

INTRODUCTION

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CATHOLICK CHURCH.

PART I.

Shewing the Nature of the Catholick Church.

Par. **S**IR, I come to thank you for your many useful Discourses of late to your people, and especially for one of them.

Min. I endeavour'd to make them as useful as I could, and I pray God they may be useful: But what is that one you mentioned?

Par.

Par. 'Twas that concerning the *Catholick Church*; Truly, I was very much pleas'd with it; and the rather, because the *Romish* Priests that are now very busy in practising upon the people, insist on this as their main Artifice; What? Will ye not believe the Church? Is there any Salvation out of the Church? And the like.

Min. I am very glad you took so much notice of it, and I hope the rest of my hearers did so too; I heard as much as you tell me, concerning this sophistical device of theirs to corrupt our people, and I Preach'd it on purpose to arm them against it.

Par. But that I should rob you too much of your time, I would beg the favour to discourse it a little over again with you; for I am pretty much abroad, and often happen into the company of *Papists*, and sometimes of Priests, and the Subject of Discourse is usually, *The Catholick Church*: Now, I would be glad to be so furnished, as to be able to stand my ground against them.

Min. With all my heart; time cannot be better spent than in doing so good a work.

Par. If you please then, I'll propose the questions to you, as sometimes they propose them to me. And the first is, What's meant by the *Catholick Church*?

Min. Taking your Question to be meant of the Church since Christ's coming in the flesh, without any respect to Angels or good men before the Gospel (who yet are sometimes included in it) I thus describe it; The whole number of Christians in all ages and places, admitted into the Church by Baptism, and gathered into particular Churches under their

their respective Pastors and Bishops, united to one another, and to Christ their Head, by the profession of one Faith or Religion.

Par. Pray, Sir, let me desire you to take this description again asunder; I perceive there are many things included in it; and I desire to understand this point thoroughly.

Min. Agreed. Ask then any thing about it that you doubt of, and would be satisfied in.

Par. I would know first, Of what does the *Catholick Church* consist?

Min. I have told you; The whole number of Christians in all Ages and Places; Every individual person that hath given up his name to Christ, and makes profession of his Religion, is a Member of this Church, and all of them together make up the *Catholick Church*, or the Mystical Body of Christ.

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular, says the Apostle; I might also tell you that the word in the Original, used to express the Church by, properly signifies the whole number of persons belonging to any City or Corporation assembled together. 1 Cor. 12. 27.

Par. What is the Rite or Ceremony, whereby persons are initiated into the Church, and made Members of it?

Min. Baptism, or immersion into, or sprinkling with water; so our Lord and Saviour ordain'd: *Go ye and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost.* Matt. 28. 19.

Par. Must not this Body have a Head, and one that is supreme in it?

Min. I have exprest that also: 'Tis the Lord Jesus Christ; *He*, says the Apostle, *is the head of the Church, and Saviour of the body.* He's the Founder of this Order; he governs it by his Laws, inspires it by his Spirit, protects it by his Providence.

Eph. 5. 23. To him is committed all power in heaven and earth, by virtue whereof he hath constituted several Officers and Governours in his Church under him: But for one Vicar-general, or Lieutenant over the whole, there is not the least ground in Scripture, as I may have an occasion to shew you.

Par. You have prevented me the asking you that Question, Whether Christ hath left a visible Head on Earth? yet I have one or two more questions about this matter to put to you; Pray, what is it makes the *Catholick Church* one?

Min. The profession of one Faith, or Christianity. But two things you must here remember: (1.) By Faith or Christianity, I mean the whole Institution or Doctrine of Christ contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, especially those of the *New-Testament.* And then (2.) that this Faith or Religion must be publickly profest, which is best done by meeting together, and worshipping God according to the prescriptions Christ hath left us in his Gospel, one chief part whereof is our frequent participation of the Blessed Sacrament, which our Lord hath instituted as a federal Rite of his Church, aptly representing both that near conjunction betwixt Christ and his Church, and that mutual fellowship of one Christian with another. So St. Paul speaks, *For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* 'Tis this gave being to the

1 Cor. 10. 17.

the Church, and on this depends its unity : To preserve the Faith from corruption, is to preserve the Church from Schisms ; but to add to, or diminish from the Faith, is to break and divide the Church.

Par. Why did you say in your description of the Church, That Believers must be gathered into particular Churches, under their several Pastors and Bishops ?

Min. For very good reason ; because otherwise it might be a rout or multitude, but not a Church. As, the profession of Christianity unites the several members to one another, and all to Christ their common Head ; so, that there might be order and government amongst the Members, and that the several acts of Communion in the Church (whereby their profession of Christ's Religion is chiefly manifested and maintain'd) might be duly perform'd, 'tis necessary that there should be Officers to direct, and oversee, and take care in the discharge of them. Hence saies the Apostle, *Christ* Eph. 4. 11. *gave in his Church, some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ ;* And tho' these Pastors and Bishops are Officers of the Church in general, and may on occasion advise and act for the good of the whole, and exercise their power and function in any part of it ; yet for the greater advantage and better edification of Believers, 'twas necessary every Bishop, and Presbyter under his Bishop, should be set his own bounds and limits ; what to be his particular charge, and where more especially to concern his care and conduct ;

each of which charges within such a compass, are parts of the *Catholick Church*, as agreeing in the same Faith, and making profession of it in the same acts of Communion.

Par. But if Bishops and Pastors are the peculiar Officers of Christ's Church, What place and power do you allow the supreme Magistrate in this Government ?

Min. Tho' Kings and Princes are not properly Officers and Governours of Christ's Church, as a Church, it being not a Civil or Secular, but a distinct, Spiritual Society ; yet to them is to be given the external management of this Society, a power to settle its outward Policy, and to be the Moderators and Governors of it : Upon this account the Great *Constantine* stiled himself a Civil Bishop, as being chiefly concern'd in the guidance and direction of the outward affairs of the Church. The Bishops and Pastors of the Church have their Ordination, and derive their Commission from an higher power, even Christ ; but they act and exercise it under the protection of the supreme Magistrate.

Par. You have very well clear'd the description you gave of Christ's *Catholick Church*. Pray give me leave to ask you, Has not God promised that his Church shall never fail on Earth ?

Min. Yes : And you have the promise in these words, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it ;* And again, Christ speaking to his Apostles, says, *I will be with you always to the end of the world.*

Par. I suppose this promise is made to the Universal *Catholick Church*, and not to any one part of it.

Min.

Επίσκοπος
ἐστίν.

Matt. 16. 18.

Matt. 28. 20.

Min. It is so ; and therefore you may observe our Saviour speaks indefinitely, *My Church*, without naming any particular Church in this, or that other Countrey.

Par. But how far does this promise of our Saviour secure the *Catholick Church* from Error and defecti-
on ?

Min. To be sure, from all Fundamental Errors; For the Church can last no longer than that Doctrine remains in it that gave a being to it : Whatever Errors destroy that, destroy the Church : and therefore our Saviour's Promise must be suppos'd to preserve it free from all such Errors.

Par. What then is the true meaning of the Promise ?

Min. It seems to be this ; That there shall be always a Church in the World, in some place or other, professing the true Faith of Christ, and living in the use of his holy institutions so long as the World shall last.

Par. The *Catholick Church* then may err in some lesser matters ; I mean, in Points not Fundamental, and yet remain the true Church of Christ ; and so may any part of it, and yet be a true Member of the whole.

Min. You say well : As a man may have many Infirmities and Wounds about him, and yet remain a true man : As a particular Christian may be guilty of many mistakes, both in Faith and Practice, and yet be a true Christian, provided his mistakes destroy not the Foundation of Christianity. Were there not at some time very great Corruptions in the *Jewish Church*, even Idolatry it self, and yet be-

because they worshipt the true God, tho others also, God did not wholly cast them off from being his People ? Was there not Faction and Prophaness, and great Mistakes in point of Faith, concerning the Resurrection, in the Church of *Corinth*, and yet St. *Paul* still acknowledg'd them to be a real and true Church ? Were not the Seven Churches in *Asia* over-run with many Errors and unchristian Practices, and yet St. *John* writes to them by the Spirit, and in the Name of Christ himself, as unto true Christian Churches ?

Par. What was the *Catholick Church* ? or where was it when *Luther* began his Reformation ?

Min. Was I not able to tell you where, 'twould be no weakning to our Saviour's Promise : He might have a Church on Earth, tho not visible to us : For he has no where promis'd, that the Number should be always great, or its Condition prosperous : Nay, the Apostle foretold, that there should be a great defection, and *falling away*. The Church has sometimes been forc'd to hide, sometimes to fly : Sometimes you find it privately in an Upper Room, sometimes skulking in Caves, and Dens, and Wildernesses ; now be-smear'd with Blood, then deform'd with Heresie ; ceasing in one Countrey, rising up in another ; being more conspicuous, or obscure, as Persecutions and Heresies grew and prevail'd in it.

Par. This Discourse brings into my mind the sad Complaint of the Prophet *Elijah*, Lord, says he, *they have broken thy covenant, and destroy'd thy altars and prophets, and I only am left alive ; and they seek my life also.* But God let him see, how much
he

2 Thes. 2. 3.

1 King. 19. 10.

he was mistaken; that tho he knew it not, he had yet a small Church, not infected with Idolatry; *I Ver. 18. have yet seven thousand knees that have not bowed to Baal.* So may it happen, that Christ's Church may look small, and be obscure in her Number, and yet I believe in all Ages, there was in some part and corner of the World, or other, a little Flock; some few true Christians, that profess the true Faith, entire, and without mixture, and they made up the Church of Christ.

Min. I am perfectly of your mind; and I think I am able to produce several instances to this purpose: Amongst all the Corruptions in the *Romish* Church, scarce was there one, but what, when it first appear'd, was by one or other oppos'd and protested against. Have there not been many in that Communion it self, that have openly complain'd of the degenerate State of their Church, and petition'd for a Reformation? And we may reasonably presume there are many still, and would be thousands more, were they not frightened, and kept in awe by their unreasonable and unchristian Severities. The *Albigenses* and *Waldenses* will ever be remembred, as so many Confessors and Martyrs for the Truth, as well as instances of the Papal cruelty. Old *Wickliff*, and his Followers, were stout Champions against the *Romish* Superstitions in *England*; and poor *Husse*, and his Disciples, were no less brave and resolute against them in *Germany* and *Bohemia*.

Par. Indeed I have read of these; but the *Romanists* tell us, they were guilty of as great Errors, and lewd practices, if not worse, than we think those, that we charge upon them.

Min.

Min. 'Tis their common practice to blacken, and load every person that sets up against them. I do not deny, but that some Errors they might have; however, theirs they had not:—and for those that are laid to their charge, some are not of any pernicious Nature and Consequence, and others wholly false, and fasten'd on them out of design, by the malicious *Romanists*: Such are their ungodly Stories concerning the *Waldenses*, that they were the Followers of the *Manichees*, owning Two Gods, one the Author and Principle of Good, the other of Evil: That they denied Christ to be God: It may be, because they denied the Bread in the Sacrament to be Christ. But *Reinerus*, and *St. Bernard*, give a far different account of them.

Par. I should be glad, if you remember it, to hear what they say of them.

Min. I'll repeat their Testimony to the best of my remembrance: *Reinerus* thus speaks concerning them; *They continued so long as no Sect hath: Some say, it hath been since Sylvester, some since the Apostles* (there is universality of time); *and there is almost no Countrey wherein it spreadeth not* (there is universality of place); *They have a great shew of piety, living uprightly before men, and believing all things aright concerning God, and all the Articles of the Creed: Their only Fault was, as he adds, They hate and blaspheme the Church of Rome.* *St. Bernard* speaks of them much to the same purpose: *If you require an account of their Faith, nothing is more Christian; if of their Conversation, nothing more commendable; they frequent the Church, honour the Priests, offer their Gifts, make Confession, and communicate in the Sacraments,*

Illyr. Catal.
test. Devot. tom.
2. p. 543.

Serm. 65. super Cant. edit.
Venet. An.
1575. Tom. 1.
p. 328.

ments: They hurt none, circumvent none, are true and just in all their dealings, and perform what they promis'd: all the Crime he tax'd them with, was, that they did not observe the Monkish Vow of Continence.

Par. What think you of all the particular National Churches in the World at the time of the Reformation? The *Roman, Greek, Armenian, the Ægyptian, and Abassine Churches*? Might they not all be parts of Christs Church?

Min. Each of these had its Errors and Corruptions, it must be confest; tho not one deprav'd to that degree as the *Roman*; yet because she holds all the Fundamental Articles of Faith, we, in charity, allow her to be a true Church, and so a part of the *Catholick*.

Par. Where was the Church of *England* then?

Min. She was included in the *Roman Church*, of which she was a Member, and held in subjection by her.

Par. But you allow the *Roman Church* was a part of Christs *Catholick Church*: why then did we separate from her?

Min. I said also, she was a very corrupt Church; and we separated from her only in those things wherein she had separated from the *Catholick Faith*: So that tho we went off from her, we went nearer and closer to the *Catholick Church*.

Par. But what Authority had the Church of *England* to reform her self, and redress Abuses?

Min. As she was a free independent Church, as well as the *Roman*: The *Romish Church* had indeed brought us into Slavery and Subjection, and by that means obruded what Doctrines and Practices she

pleas'd, upon us ; but the Authority was usurp'd, and the Impositions very gross, calculated on purpose to maintain their ill-gotten greatness and power ; So that our Reformation chiefly consisted in throwing off the *Roman* Yoak, and the spurious Doctrines she had added to the *Faith once deliver'd to the Saints*, which is the Foundation of the Christian Church.

Par. I perceive then, had the *Romish* Faith been sound and Orthodox, the Church of *England* might have justly cast off her Authority, being usurp'd, and asserted her own Freedom ; even as it's the Duty and Glory of a Nation to depose an Usurper, tho his Laws and Government are never so excellent.

Min. You say right : she might have done so ; and then how much more reason had she to do it, when both her Faith and Practices were so very unwholesome and dangerous to mens Souls ? And when the casting off the one, made way for the easier getting rid of the other ?

Par. What are those corruptions in the *Romish* Church, that make her communion so unsafe and hazardous ?

Min. They are those Twelve new Articles of Faith added in Pope *Pius* the 4th's Creed, *Transubstantiation*, *Half-communion*, *Purgatory*, *Image-worship*, *Invocation of Saints*, and the rest : You may meet with them all, and at the same time see them fully and excellently confuted in two little Books, come out lately ; *Plausible Arguments of the Church of Rome confuted* ; and *Catechism*, &c.

Par. But can two Churches of different communions be both parts of the one *Catholic Church* ?
They

They and we have but little or no communion with one another, and yet I see you grant them both to be parts of Christ's *Catholick Church*.

Min. Yes, we have still communion with her in part, tho not in every part : We do not indeed hold communion with her, as her Subject and Slave, nor in her Corruptions and Errors ; but we still hold communion with her as a Sister-Church, and so far as she holds the Truth of Christ.

Par. But to what Church did we joyn our selves when we left her ?

Min. We neither left her, nor went to another, but remain'd as before, a part of *Christ's Catholick Church* ; only then we were a part of the *Catholick Church*, as included in the *Roman*, and enslav'd by her ; and now a part of it still, as manumitted, and at liberty ; then a diseas'd and infected part, now a part recover'd and restor'd to health.

Par. Sir, I thank you heartily ; you have given me a very satisfactory account of the Nature of the *Catholick Church*, and of the Reformation of ours : And I think I am now well prepar'd to answer that common question of the *Romanists*, *Where was your Religion before Luther* ?

Min. I believe you are : for it's no difficult matter to frame an Answer to it from this Discourse ; viz. 'Twas contain'd in the Writings of Christ and his Apostles, profess'd in all Christian Churches in all Ages ; for some hundreds of years, with great purity, and free from mixture ; ever since, in most Churches more or less adulterated with dross and corruptions ; but in no Church more than in the *Roman*, and the *English*, while in subjection to the

Roman. So then before *Luther* the Religion we profess was in our own Church, tho loaded and obscured with *Romish* Errors and Superstitions; and we have now no new Religion, nor new Church, but the old Religion, and the old Church reform'd and restor'd to its first beauty and lustre.

Par. But is not the meaning of that Question, Where was your Religion, as it's now reform'd, when *Luther* began his Reformation?

Min. In the first Ages 'twas in *Palestine* and *Greece*, in *Ægypt*, in *Antioch*, and in *Rome* it self, in *Britain*, and in all parts where the unwearied labours, and incessant Travels of the Holy Apostles carried it: But as for that very time, when *Luther* appear'd, it may be 'twas in the *Greek*, in the *Abassine* and *Ægyptian* Churches, amongst the *Armenian* Christians, who all dissent from most, if not all the *Romish* Errors that our Reform'd Church condemns: It may be 'twas in a corner, under a cloud, cover'd with Rubbish. What if we say, 'twas no where? since Christ never promis'd, that his Church and Religion should not be corrupted nor persecuted, but only that it should not fail, nor be destroy'd.

Par. You have made it very clear and evident: I guess the *Papists* cannot give so good an account, where their Religion was before the Council of *Trent*? I mean, as it's now constituted and determin'd.

Min. Well remembered! 'Tis a good way to turn the Question upon them: For notwithstanding all their Vaunts and Brags of Succession, Antiquity, and the like; their Additional Articles of Faith in Pope *Pius's* Creed, are of a very late Date, compar'd

par'd with the Faith of the English Church as it's now Reform'd ; ours is the old Religion, theirs Innovation ; ours Ancient, theirs in comparison but of yesterday ; they added many false Doctrines to the Christian Faith ; the true Faith that was first, and from Christ and his Apostles, we keep ; the false Doctrines that have been invented since, and added to it by the *Trent-Fathers*, we have left.

Par. Pray, can you tell the precise time, and the particular persons and places, where, and when, and by whom those corruptions of theirs were forged ? I perceive they often ask that question when we charge their Religion with novel Inventions.

Min. It's not very material whether we can or no, since we are sure, and can prove them to be gross corruptions, such as were never taught by Christ and his Apostles ; The Holy Scriptures are the Charter of our Corporation, they contain the Laws of our Society ; We embrace that Faith the first Christians did ; are in the same bottom, and hope to be saved with them. Has Christ and his Apostles any where commanded or tolerated, nay, has he not forbidden *Image-worship*, *Invocation of Saints*, *Prayers in an unknown Tongue* ? Is it any where said by them, *That the Bishop of Rome shall be the Supreme Head of the Church on Earth* ? *The Infallible Decider of Controversies* ? *Have power to make new Articles of Faith*, and as many as he pleases ? *That Penance is a Sacrament* ? *That Auricular Confession is necessary to Salvation* ? If some of these are forbid, others not to be found in the Sacred Scriptures, Either Christ was an imperfect, and a fallible Law-giver, and his Apostles unfaithful.

ful and treacherous Stewards of the Mysteries of God, or else the Christian Faith is whole and entire without them; and they forgeries and novelties invented by evil men to serve the ends of Ambition and Covetousness.

Par. I confess this Argument is sufficient, (*viz.* That they are contrary to, or at least, not to be found in the Inspired Writings) to prove them Errors, were we not able to give an account of their Original and progress; for an Error may be an Error, tho' no man knows the first Author and Propagator of it? The Tares may be sowed in the night, and it may not be discern'd when and who sowed them; yet we may know that they are Tares, and that 'twas an enemy too that did it: But I think our learned Protestant Writers have trac'd most of them back, even to the very time of their birth.

Min. They have so, and I'll stay a little longer with you, to gratify your curiosity with the discovery. The Pope obtained not the title of Universal Bishop till *Boniface* the 3d's time, about 600 years after Christ. Transubstantiation was not made an Article of Faith, till the Council of *Lateran*, under *Innocent* the 3d, in the year 1215. The Doctrine of Purgatory got not much footing and credit in the World till about 1140, and the Council of *Trent* first stamp'd it an Article of Faith. The Doctrine of Indulgences is a weed that grew up with that of Purgatory, like *Ivy*, twines about it, and lives upon it; but was not grown to any considerable height, till *Leo* the 10th's time, when *Luther* set up so strenuously against it. They boast of the second Council of *Nice*, to justify the Antiquity of their Image-

Image-worship ; but we know the Primitive Church abhorr'd it, some of the Fathers condemn'd not only the worshipping, but the very making of Images ; That 'twas not practis'd in the *French-Church* till near 900, nor in *Germany* till after 1200 years. The Council of *Constance*, *Anno Dom.* 1418, was the first that denied the Cup to the Laity, with an expresse *notwithstanding* to the Institution of Christ ; and the Council of *Florence*, 1439, the first that fixt the number of the Seven Sacraments, and made it an Article of Faith. To name no more, The Pope's Supremacy and Infallibility were much oppos'd, never past into a Decree, till *Leo* the 10th in a packt Synod at *Lateran*, 1516. contrary to the Decrees of *Constance*, *Basil*, *Bourges* and *Pisa*, got it ordain'd, *That the Pope had Authority over all Councils ; and that it was necessary to Salvation, that all Christians should be subject to him.* In sum, the *Romish* Faith was not, as it is now, till the famous Council of *Trent*, which advanc'd many things into Articles of Faith, that before went only for the sentiments of particular Doctors, and were believ'd or disbeliev'd at pleasure ; But now must be believed as necessary to Salvation.

Par. I have lately met with the Confession of Faith drawn up at the close of the Council of *Trent*, and confirm'd by the Bull of *Pius* the 4th, *Anno Dom.* 1564. and that indeed seems to speak the same thing.

Min. It does so ; After reckoning up the Articles contain'd in the Ancient Creeds, it recites the additional ones of that Council, and then obliges all to give an equal assent to them with the former, under pain of damnation.

Par.

Par. Sir, I am much engag'd to you for this Christian entertainment, and the freedom you have permitted me to take with you ; I am satisfied that the Catholick Faith is always the same, and that that profest in our Church is that deliver'd by Christ and his Apostles, held always, and in all places by the Catholick Church ; and on the other hand, that that profest in the *Roman* Church is not to be found in the Scriptures, was not the faith of the ancient Primitive Church, was ever and anon opposed by some or other of note, even in their own Communion, and not settled as it is now, before the *Trent-Council* : And therefore that ours is the Catholick Faith and not theirs, and consequently our Church, with those that profess the same Faith, the true *Catholick Church* ; and that, if theirs be allowed to be a part of it, 'tis for the sake of our Faith which she owns and professes in common with us, and not for her own that she has added, and we condemn.

P A R T II.

Shewing that the Church of Rome is not the one Catholick Church of Christ.

Par. SIR. The last time you gave me the freedom to Discourse with you, you said, I remember, That the *Catholick Church* of Christ was made up of all the particular Churches in the World ; Pray how come the *Romanists* to say, that their Church is the *Catholick Church* ? *Min.*

Min. Because they would have us believe that she is the Mistress of all Churches, and that all ought to be in subjection to the Pope as Supreme Head on Earth.

Par. That then is the meaning of some of their late Authors, when they say, That it is not the particular Diocese or Province of *Rome* that they call the *Catholick Church*, but the Church of *Rome*, and all that are join'd in communion with her, and believe as she believes.

Min. Yes, it is so: But it's no hard matter to shew the weakness and falshood of this Assertion.

Par. Before you enter upon that, pray inform me, Do not some of the Fathers call the Church of *Rome* the *Catholick Church*? The Papists tell us so in their Writings.

Min. Yes, they do, and other Churches are call'd so as well as the *Roman*, and all by way of distinction from Schismatical and Heretical Churches: So we read of the *Catholick Church* in *Smyrna*, and the *Catholick Church* in *Alexandria*, and many others might be instanc'd in: 'Twas the common Appellation for every Church that held the true Catholick Faith: that is, this is a *Catholick Church*, and this Church, with the others that profess the same Faith, is the one *Catholick Church*.

Par. Why then the *Roman* Church, provided she held the true Catholick Faith, with all those in communion with her, and that believe as she believes, might be call'd the *Catholick Church*?

Min. Yes, if by all that believe as she believes, be limited only to those Articles contain'd in Scripture, and summ'd up in the Three Creeds, separated

ted from the many gross Errors she has added to them, then the Church of *Rome*, and all those others, are the *Catholick Church*: But then this is no more than what may be said of any Church as well as the *Roman*; and the *English Catholick Church*, with all that hold communion with her, is the one *Catholick Church* of Christ on Earth, as well as the *Roman Catholick*.

Par. I perceive you think they mean something more by *believing as she believes*, than the Faith contain'd in the Scriptures.

Min. No doubt they do; they mean those that acknowledg Subjection to her, and believe all at large, what not only the Scriptures, but that Church, pretending to unscriptural Traditions, declares to be Articles of Faith; viz. those Twelve of Pope *Pius* the 4th; and then the Church of *Rome*, with all that believe as she believes, is not the *Catholick Church*, but very unsound and corrupt parts of it.

Par. Now, Sir, if you please, I'll tell you what I have met with in their late Authors, to prove the Pope to be Supreme, and that the Church is call'd *Catholick*, by agreeing with that of *Rome*, and yielding Subjection to him.

Min. Do so, and I'll give you as plain an Answer as I can to them.

Par. They say, that Christ invested St. *Peter* with a paramount power and jurisdiction, not only above, but over all the rest of the Apostles; and that the Pope derives it from him, as-being his Successor.

Min. This they say, but they cannot prove any thing of it, either that St. *Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*,
or.

or had such a power; or if he was Bishop of *Rome*, and had such a power, that the Pope has an hereditary Right to it.

Par. I have heard it indeed controverted, whether *St. Peter* was ever Bishop of *Rome*?

Min. The matter will bear very well a Dispute: for tho' *St. Peter* might be very instrumental in founding and building up that Church; yet it is not very likely he was formally a Bishop of it, it being beneath the Dignity of an Apostle, who, as such, was Bishop of the whole *Catholick Church*, to sit down for some considerable time, Bishop of one part of it: This is such another absurd degradation of him, as to say, the Pope is Rector of some little Parish.

Par. But certainly they have some proof for what they affirm so confidently, and on which they lay so great a stress.

Min. Their chief proof is out of *Eusebius's Chronicle*, where he relates, that *St. Peter* sat at *Antioch* Seven years; after which he travell'd to *Rome*, where he resided Five and Twenty years. But this passage is suspected to be put in on design, it being left out in *J. f. Scaliger's Greek Edition*; and indeed seems to be contradicted by *Eusebius* himself, in his *Ecclesiastical History*; where he tells us, that *St. Peter* having preach'd the Gospel in *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Bithynia*, *Cappadocia*, &c. at the last, or at the end (that is) near the approach of his death, being at *Rome*, was put to death.

Lug. Bat.
1606.

L. 3. c. 1.

Par. I observ'd in your reciting the Testimony out of *Eusebius*, that *St. Peter* is said to be Bishop of *Antioch*, before he came to *Rome*: It should seem

then, that if Succession gives a Right, the Bishops of *Antioch*, where *St. Peter* was first Bishop, have a better plea for the Supremacy than the Bishops of *Rome*.

Min. You have inferr'd right : But tho' both be granted, that *St. Peter* was Bishop of *Rome*, and Succession conveys a Right, yet neither signify any thing, unless *St. Peter* himself had such a power ; for he could not derive upon them what he had not himself. Let me therefore hear the proofs you were mentioning the *Romanists* bring for *St. Peter's* Supremacy of Power and Jurisdiction.

Par. The first and chiefest they urge, is those words of our Saviour, *Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* They make a great noise about this, and raise mighty triumphs upon it.

Min. I know they do ; but as great a cry as they make, here is but little wooll ; and being conscious of the weakness of the Argument, they would help it out with noise and confidence.

Par. But is not, *On this Rock*, to be understood of *St. Peter's* Person ?

Min. It's very probable, No : For *St. Peter* some while after these words spoken, denied his Master, and so for a time denied the Faith ; and now if the Church be built on him as the foundation, the foundation failing, the Church for that time must have failed too, contrary to what our Saviour promised, that it should not.

Par. What then is the meaning of it ?

Min. One or both these Two things : (1.) *St. Peter's* Faith : *St. Peter* having said before, *Thou art Christ*,

Matt. 16 18.

Verse 16.

Christ, the Son of the Living God; our Saviour answer'd, *Thou art Peter, and on this rock, on this Faith thou hast now made profession of, I will build my Church.* (2.) What our Saviour here said of *St. Peter*, might be said in the name of all the rest of the Apostles; As he made that confession of Faith in the name of them all, so this honourable character might be conferr'd on him in the name of all too; and this seems the more probable, because the same thing, in a manner, is in other places said in common of all of them.

Τῷ Πίττῳ τῷ
πέτρῳ, τῷ πικρῷ
ἡ δὲ λέξις.
St. Chrys. in
loc.
Unus pro om-
nibus loquens
& Ecclesiae
voce respon-
dens, Cyp. Ep.
35.
Eph. 2. 20.
Rev. 12. 1.
Rev. 21. 19.

Par. Yet it should seem, that something peculiar is in these words conferr'd on *St. Peter*: In the foregoing words *St. Peter's* forwardness and zeal to confess Christ, appear'd above the rest; *St. Peter answer'd and said, Thou art Christ, &c.* And therefore why should not some particular Badg of Honour be meant in these words, to be fixt on him, as the reward of it?

Min. It may be there is; and if any thing, this may be it; That he should have the honour to be the first Founder of the Christian Church, both amongst *Jews* and *Gentiles*; Amongst the *Jews*, when at one Sermon, *St. Peter* being the first and chief Speaker, no less than Three Thousand were converted to the Faith of Christ: amongst the *Gentiles*, when he was commanded by God in a Vision, to repair to *Cornelius*, and to instruct him in the Christian Doctrine, who was the first Convert, we read of, to the Faith of Christ amongst the *Gentiles*.

Acts 2. 41.

Acts 10. 1.

Par. You have fully satisfied me, that there is no proof in this Text for *St. Peter's* Supremacy, and con-

consequently not for the Pope's, if he be his Successor. Will you give me leave to name another Argument of theirs? They tell us, that *St. Peter* is always nam'd *first* in the Catalogue of the Apostles; and that *first* does not there signify first in the order of numbring: for then it would have followed, the second, and the third, as the other Apostles are named; but it does not: By *first* therefore it should seem, is meant, a primacy of power and jurisdiction.

Min. 'Tis true, *St. Peter* is always set first in the Evangelists Rolls of the Apostles; but he is not so in other places of Scripture, where we find sometimes *James*, sometimes *Paul* and *Apollo*, and sometimes *Andrew* numbred before him: But let it be granted, that for the most part he is named before the rest of the Apostles, all it can signify is this, That upon the account of the eminency of his Faith, the fervour of his zeal in the Cause of his Master, of his being first called to the Apostolical Office, a primacy of Order and Honour is due to him; And more than this, a primacy of Power and Jurisdiction, it cannot signify, it being so plainly contrary to other Scriptures, and those innumerable.

Par. I was going to desire you, since their Arguments for *St. Peter's* Supremacy are so weak, to shew how strong our proofs are against it.

Min. To give you them briefly; We find our Saviour investing all the Apostles with equal powers, and deriving on all the same mission which he himself had receiv'd from God; empowering all to Preach, Plant and Propagate the Faith; to feed and rule the Flock of Christ, committing the same

Keys

Gal. 2. 9.
1 Cor. 3. 22.
Joh. 1. 45.

Joh. 20. 21.

Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to one as well as another; breathing the same Holy Ghost on all; forbidding all ambitious attempts amongst them, who should be greatest; promising indifferently to all Twelve Thrones to sit upon, judging the Twelve Tribes of *Israel*; does not *St. Paul* say, *Christ set in his Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets*—? He does not say, first *St. Peter*, but first Apostles, all the Apostles were first. Was not *St. Peter* so far from challenging, much less exercising any such Superiority over the Apostles, that we find him stiling himself their fellow Presbyter, and submitting to the Orders of the Apostolick Colledge? Besides, are not *St. James* and *St. John* said in Scripture to be Pillars, as well as *St. Peter*? Are not the whole Twelve Apostles equally stiled the Twelve foundations of the New *Jerusalem*? Does not *St. Paul* challenge an equality with the chiefest Apostles? And did he not, on occasion, withstand *St. Peter* to the face, which he neither ought, nor durst to have done, had he been his Superior and Lord?

Matt. 19. 28.

1 Pet. 5. 1, 2.

Gal. 2. 7.

Par. The proof is clear and full beyond exception; I see plainly the Pope cannot justify his Supremacy by virtue of any right, as *St. Peter's* Successor. But whence had he it then? How came his Holiness to rise to this height of Power and Dominion?

Min. The Truth is, how large an Empire soever his Holiness now claims over all other Churches, his Authority, in the beginning, was no greater than that of his Brother Bishops; the title was the same, and his Holiness lay in common to them all:

A.

A Precedence indeed was given him, because he was Bishop of the Imperial City; Addressees were made to him, because he was near the Court and the Royal presence; Appeals were brought him, because he was powerful, and as able to defend as to determine; And that Church was often made the standard of the Catholick Faith, because for a time it continued pure and uncorrupt, whilst almost all others were overgrown with *Arianism* and other Heresies. But of these Honours that were given him, he made advantage to climb higher; from a Priority of place, he soon challeng'd a superiority of Power; from being next to the Emperor, he aspir'd to be next to God; from being an Arbitrator, he set up for a Judg; and when he was grown so great, that none durst controul him, he would be an unerring Judg, and grew Infallible.

Par. These, I perceive, were the steps of the Papal Pride and Empire; But I have been told, the Pope was beholding to that bloody Regicide *Phocas* for the title of Universal Pastor.

Min. I shall shew you that presently; but 'twill not be amiss here to inform you, That the Pope's challenging a Supremacy of power over the whole Christian Church, is not only contrary to Scripture, but to the Ancient Canons of the Church.

Par. I have heard and read as much in some of our own Authors; but pray, which are those Canons?

Min. They are chiefly four; or, if you will, but one, four times repeated and confirm'd, in the first Four General Councils succeeding one another.

Par. I shall be glad to hear them read in order, if you have them at hand.

Min.

Min. I can easily gratify you in this matter : The first is that famous one, the 6th Canon of the first General Council, of *Nice*, call'd by *Constantine* the Great, *Anno Dom.* 325. which Decreed, That the Bishop of *Alexandria* shall have the same power within his Province, as the Bishop of *Rome* had in his. The words of the Canon are these, *Let Ancient Customs still take place, those that are in Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis, That the Bishop of Alexandria have power over all these; because such also is the Custom of the Bishop of Rome.*

Par. What do you infer from this Canon ?

Min. I infer that which is obvious to every eye, *viz.* That the Bp. of *Rome* had not then an Universal power over all Christian Churches, since the Bp. of *Alexandria* was to exercise the same jurisdiction in his own Province, as the Bp. of *Rome* did in his.

Par. You'll be pleas'd to go on to recite the other Canons you mention'd ?

Min. The second is, the 3d Canon of the 2d General Council held at *Constantinople* by the command of *Theodosius* the Emperor, *Anno Dom.* 380, which Decreed, That the Bp. of *Constantinople*, upon the account of its being new *Rome*, or the Seat of the Empire, should have the priviledg of Honour next to the Bp. of *Rome*.

Par. How does this Canon make against the Pope's Supremacy ?

Min. As it declares what kind of primacy the Bp. of *Rome* had above other Bps, and on what bottom it stood; *viz.* a primacy of Honour, or the first place; and because *Rome*, of which he was Bp, had been the Imperial City. Now the Council Decreed, That the Bp. of *Constantinople* should have the same Honour next to him, and for the same Reason; because *Constanti-*

nople was become *New Rome*, That is, the Seat of the Empire was remov'd thither.

Par. You have made this very plain to me; What is the 3d Canon?

Min. It is the 8th Canon of the 3d General Council at *Ephesus*, *Anno Dom.* 431. It runs thus, *Let the same course be observ'd in other Diocesses and in all Provinces every where, That none of the holy Bishops seize upon another Province, which was not of old and from the beginning under his power.*

Par. This Canon needs no exposition, 'tis so evident; Pray, What do the *Romanists* say to it?

Min. Some of them deny it to be a Canon of this Council, and (as they usually serve any thing that is against them) have endeavour'd to strike it out from amongst the Acts of it. Others say, it respected a particular Case, the exemption of the *Cyprian* Bps. from the encroachments of the Patriarch of *Antioch*, who pretended that it belong'd to him to ordain their Metropolitan. Now tho' this be granted, yet the Decree passing in general words, without any reserve for the Bp. of *Rome*, must be supposed to conclude him, as well as any other, to be an ambitious Usurper, if he claim'd or exercis'd any jurisdiction over any Church, that was not from the beginning under his power.

Par. This is so full to the purpose, that it may well be the last.

Min. Yet I told you there was a fourth; 'Tis the 28th Canon of the 4th General Council Assembled at *Chalcedon*, *Anno Dom.* 451, which ordain'd, That the Bp. of *Constantinople* should enjoy equal priviledges with the Bp. of *Rome*, there being the same reason for the one as the other, *Constantinople* then being the Imperial Seat, as *Rome* had been.

Par.

Par. I dare say the *Romanists* do not let this Canon pass without some dirt thrown upon it.

Min. You are a notable guesser ; some serve it as they do the forequoted Canon of the General Council of *Ephesus*, leave it out of their Editions of the Councils ; others tell the World, That this Council was not free, and the Canon extorted by tumultuous Importunity, when as all the Fathers testified their owning of it by their Subscriptions ; others, That it's spurious, and put in clandestinely ; But how then came the Pope's Legats, who were present at the Council, so vehemently to oppose it ? Had there been no such Canon, there would have been no need of such an opposition. Others, That the Fathers at this Council offer'd the Title of Supreme and Universal Pastor to the Pope ; and all, because the persons delegated by the Pope to inform the Council against *Dioscorus* Patriarch of *Alexandria*, do in their accusation against him, presume to give their Master that glorious title. All are calumnies to bespatter and bring into discredit a Canon that lies so heavy upon them and their Cause too.

Par. Truly these Canons are very plain and manifest, and fully prove, not only the right of jurisdiction that every Church has over its own Members, but withal, that the Pope has no right of jurisdiction over all. But I think there is no need of such kind of proof, after so express and pregnant an one from Scripture against St. *Peter's* Supremacy over the rest of the Apostles, on which chiefly the Pope's is grounded.

Min. It may be not ; But the Church of *England* owning the four first General Councils, and often appealing to them, I was willing to let you see what they say as to this point. Other Canons also there are very

Ancient, founded on the Independent power every Church has over those in Communion with her, *forbidding Appeals to be made to forreign and transmarine Churches*; requiring, *That no person excluded the Communion of one Church, should be receiv'd by another*; But these are enough.

Par. Now, you are among the Ancients, you may please to let me see, what other proof there is in Antiquity, That the Bishops of *Rome* in the first Ages had no such extravagant Power and Authority over the Church.

Min. I must do it briefly then; The Bishops of *Rome* began very early to aspire after it, to discover their ambitious inclinations that way; But they were always withstood, and censur'd for it by other Bishops.

Par. Are there many instances of this nature?

Min. Yes, too many; I'll mention some few, and shall begin with that of Pope *Victor*, *Anno Dom.* 196, who, because the Eastern Bishops would not comply with the custom of the Church of *Rome*, about the time of keeping *Easter*, rashly, and with a Spirit favouring too much of pride and arrogance, threw them under the sentence of Excommunication.

Par. It looks indeed like a very severe censure on so small an occasion.

Min. 'Twas thought to be so then by all good men; The whole Christian World was amaz'd at it, and many eminent persons, especially that meek and holy Bishop *Irenæus*, sharply chid and rebuk'd him for it.

Par. This Instance I have often met with in our own Authors.

Min. I'll give you another: 'Twas not long after this, when the Eastern Churches, and especially those in

in *Africk*, thought it necessary that persons Baptiz'd by Hereticks, should be Baptiz'd anew ; *Stephen* then Bishop of *Rome* was so highly displeas'd herewith, that he declar'd he would hold no Communion with them; refus'd to see and speak with the Bishops that were deputed to give him an account of their practice, and to shew their Reasons for it ; fell foul on *St. Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*, and *Firmilian* Bishop of *Cæsarea*, and treated both with undecent language on this occasion.

Par. I wonder how these two eminent Bishops resented this hard usage from their Brother-Bishop ?

Min. Very grievously ; as they had reason ; both censur'd him for it as done out of a proud and arrogant Spirit ; and *St. Cyprian* afterwards calling an Assembly of Eighty seven Bishops to *Carthage* to debate this point, opened the Synod with a notable Speech, Syn. Carth. apud Cyp. P. 282. taxing the Bishop of *Rome* with pride and ambition, shewing that no one ought to make himself Bishop of Bishops ; that all Bishops had equal power in their respective Diocesses, and could no more be judg'd by others, than be themselves Judges of others.

Par. I am glad to hear this account of *St. Cyprian*, because I observe the *Romish* Authors cite him often on their side.

Min. I know they do ; and many other Fathers also, but with what little reason I shall shew you presently : However this has brought into my mind, a Saying or two more of *St. Cyprians* to our purpose ; *The other Apostles*, saies he, *were indeed that which Peter was*, Cyp. de Un. Eccl. *endowed with equal Consortship of Honour and Power ;* Again, *Our Lord gave to all the Apostles after his resurrection an equal power*, saying, *As the Father hath sent me, so send I you.* To the same purpose *St. Chrysostom*,
St.

Chryf. in Gal. 2. 8. *St. Paul sheweth, faith he, that each Apostle did enjoy equal dignity: And yet more clearly, when comparing St. Peter and St. Paul together, he makes St. Paul at least equal in Honour to St. Peter.*

Par. These two Instances you have mentioned are very pat to the business; but I have an imperfect remembrance in my head of some Bishop that took upon himself the title of Universal Pastor, and the Bishop of *Rome* call'd him the forerunner of Antichrist for it; would you'd please to give me an account of that Story?

Min. I design'd to have done it, had you not mention'd it, and 'tis this; In the year 589. *John* Bishop of *Constantinople*, that he might bear up the better against the growing greatness of the Bishops of *Rome*, procur'd for himself in a Synod conven'd in that City, about the Cause of *Gregory* Bishop of *Antioch*, the title of Oecumenical or Universal Bishop: But this was so passionately resented at *Rome*, that two Bishops of that See, one after another, *Pelagius* and *Gregory* the Great, loaded the Title with all the names of ignominy and reproach that could be invented; and amongst others, stiled it *Devilish and Antichristian*.

Greg. lib. 6. Ep. 30.

Par. It may be after all this, the Bishop of *Constantinople* had no ill design in taking the title upon him.

Min. It does not appear that he had; But as the *Roman Empire* was then stiled the Universe, or the whole World, and *Constantinople* the Imperial Seat; so were the Bishops over the great Churches in that Empire, and especially the Bishop of *Constantinople* the greatest of all, stiled Universal Bishops; so that it should seem the Bishop of *Constantinople* took up that great title, only the better to correspond with the

Orbis Romanus.
ἡ οἰκουμένη.
vñ.

greatness

greatness of the City o're which he was Bishop.

Par. Then, the Bishop of *Constantinople* took on him that Title rather as a badge of Honour, than any accession of power.

Min. Yes surely ; For had he design'd an unlimited jurisdiction over the whole Church by it, it's not probable that the Eastern Patriarchs and Bishops, that were most of them at that Synod, would have consented to it, and thereby at one cast have thrown away all their power.

Par. I have been told, it's no unusual thing in Antiquity, for a particular Bishop to have the title of Universal or Oecumenical Pastor bestowed upon him ; What may be the reason of that ?

Min. I shewed you this the last meeting we had, because every Bishop is Bishop of the *Catholick Church*; and tho' for the more advantageous governing of it, each Bishop has his part particularly to oversee, yet is he in some measure entrusted with the care of the whole ; as the Church is but one, and the Episcopal Office one, yet each Bishop has the whole Episcopal power, and is Bishop of the whole Church.

Par. But if this was all the Bishop of *Constantinople* aim'd at by that title, *viz.* greater honour and dignity ; calling himself the Universal Bishop, as being Bishop of the Imperial City of the Universe ; What made the Bishops of *Rome* so to storm at it, as you said they did ?

Min. Probably, as may be gathered from the aspiring temper of several of the Bishops of that See, 'twas because they were out-done in their own way, they had been long driving at that title, and another step in before them, and run away with it.

Par.

Par. 'Twas not then, I perceive, the title they so much quarrel'd with, as the persons that wore it ; Had the Bishops of *Rome* had it conferr'd on them by a Synodical Canon, it would have been but a very becoming and graceful title ; but they being past by, and others crown'd with it, it must be proud and ungodly.

Min. I believe you have hit it ; That, it's very likely, was the true reason of all their spleen and bitterness ; The title of Universal Pastor was foul and abominable only, till the Bishops of *Rome* could get it set on their own heads ; for, as much as Pope *Gregory* exclaim'd against it, and condemn'd it in the Bishop of *Constantinople*, His immediate Successor but one, Pope *Boniface* the third, got it taken from the See of *Constantinople* and affix to his own of *Rome*.

Par. Here was a quick change indeed from one extreme to the other ; one Pope with all his might rail'd against it, another within Twelve Months with all his subtilty courted it ; Pray, How came *Boniface* by it ?

Min. After the basest and vilest manner that can be thought of ; 'Twas by flattering and courting the most execrable *Phocas*, That most barbarous Traytor and Murderer, who by embruing his hands in the Blood of his Prince, and butchering his Children before his eyes, possess'd himself of his Crown and Dignity.

Par. Certainly, no Christian, much less a Christian Bishop can be suppos'd to fawn on such a Monster of a Man as this Tyrant and Usurper is represented to be.

Min. Yet no sooner was this abominable wretch in the Throne, but Pope *Gregory* first, and then *Boniface* a little after (*Sabinian* that was Pope betwixt, dying in half a year,) sooth'd and complemented him at that rate, that one would have thought him to have been a *Constantine* or an *Antoninus*.

Par

Par. So then by flattering Applications and wicked Compliances, a grant of it was obtain'd from *Phocas*.

Min. Right : *Phocas* won by the dextrous Addresses and fawning Insinuations of *Boniface*, puts out at last an Edict peremptorily requiring, that the Church of *Rome* be stil'd and esteem'd the head of all Churches, and the Pope Universal Bishop.

Par. I perceive they got it basely, and by the Favour of the basest of men ; Have their methods been any better to extend and enlarge their power and dominion ?

Min. No surely ; The Eastern Empire sinking apace by the successful Invasions of the *Saracens*, and the Western much broken by the irruptions of the *Lombards*, the Bishops of *Rome* ever watchful to serve themselves of all occurrences, took the opportunity while the Emperors hands were full, to play a game for themselves ; and what by the bounty of some Princes, particularly of *Pepin* King of *France*, who gave them the Lands his Father *Charles* had won from the *Lombards*; and by the weakness and timorousness of others embroil'd in forreign Wars, or distracted with Civil Com-motions, they have at last rais'd themselves to that height of Power and Authority, as to be able to Lord it over Gods Heritage, and to give Laws, a new Faith, I had almost said, a new Gospel to the Christian World.

Par. Sir, I am very much engag'd to you for this Discourse ; you have made it very plain, that the Supremacy of Power and Jurisdiction the Pope claims over all other Churches, is illegal and usurp'd. But tho' he has not a right of Supremacy over all Churches, he may have over some ; and they tell us his claim to the English Church is clear and unquestionable.

Min. Not so fast ; The things they found their title on, are chiefly these two ; Archbishop *Wilfred's* appealing to *Rome*, *Anno Dom.* 673. and being restored by the Popes Sentence ; and *Augustin* the Monk's coming over hither by the command of *Gregory* the 1st to convert the *Saxons* ; neither of which can do them any service.

Par. I know nothing of Archbishop *Wilfred's* case.

Min. 'Twas this in brief ; He was a great Pluralist, and had engroft into his power so many Benefices, that it became a great scandal to Religion : Hereupon King *Alfred* orders him to quit some of them ; but he refusing, appeals to the Pope ; and tho' the Pope was very much his Friend, and often writ in his favour ; yet was he not restored, till by his submission and obedience to the Kings Orders, he had made himself capable of the Kings favour. You may read this at large
C. 4. p. 6. in Archbishop *Bramhall's* *Just Vindication*.

Par. *Augustin* the Monk's story I am better acquainted with, and lately read it in the close of the Dean of *St. Paul's* *Origines Britannicæ*.

Min. There indeed you have it at large, and having read it so lately, I need say the less of it. It's most certain, Christianity was planted in this Island long before *Augustin* the Monk set his foot upon it, and that was (as our own Historian *Gildas* informs us) about the latter end of *Tiberius's* Reign ; which some make to be five or six years before it was planted in *Rome* it self. Who was the first founder of the *Brittish* Church, is not so certain ; It's enough to our purpose that it continued here in the following Ages, a free and an independent Church, govern'd under her own Bishops, and subject to no foreign jurisdiction, having Rites and Usages

Usages of her own, differing from them of the *Romish* Church both in the observation of *Easter*, the Administration of Baptism, and other particulars; a good Argument that she had no dependance on *Rome*, nor owed any subjection to her.

Par. But was not Religion at a low ebb when *Augustin* the Monk came over? And did not he recover and settle it again?

Min. Yes, it was driven up by the Pagan *Saxons* (whom the *Brittains* had call'd in to their assistance against the *Picts* and *Scots*) into a corner with the *Brittains* into *Wales*, and he, as it appears, was very instrumental to convert the *Saxons* and restore the Gospel to those parts of the Land where they most inhabited: But does this give him, or the Bishop of *Rome* that sent him, a Supremacy and Jurisdiction over us? Did the *Brittish* Bishops, seven in number, and the Christian Monks that were found here, tamely submit their necks to the *Roman* Yoke? Nothing less, They unanimously and resolutely maintain'd the rights of their Church, withstood his usurpation, and would acknowledg no subjection but to their own Primate and Metropolitan.

Par. You have produc'd many Canons and Testimonies from the Fathers against the Pope's Supremacy: I suppose you are not ignorant, what boast they make of the Fathers and Antiquity, as if they were all for it, and on their side; you have seen, I believe, three Pamphlets that came out lately; I think the Titles of them are, *The Succession of the Church and Sacraments*, *Consensus Veterum* by *E. S.* and *Nubes testium*.

Min. Yes, and I have seen all, or most of them Answer'd too before they came out; and as for what concerns

Part 2.
c. 1. p 300,
301. &c.

cerns the point of Supremacy we have been debating, you will find them fully confuted in two most excellent Books; The Dean of *St. Paul's Rational Account*, &c. and Dr. *Barrow's Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy*. And it may be some body or other that has time to spare, may think it worth their while to consider them over again.

Par. Truly there is no need of it; I have been told they are usually very tardy in their quotations, That they oftentimes translate wrong, and mistake the Sense, and in many of their Books I perceive they give us the *Greek Fathers in Latin*: But as they have set them down, I do not see how they make much for their purpose.

Min. Do you perceive that? I am, upon due examination of them, of your opinion; I cannot stay to give you a particular account of every testimony cited by them; but, as far as I can discern, the whole force and strength of them all together may be rank'd and consider'd under a few general heads.

Par. I like the method very well; and so in answering one, you answer many.

Min. The Heads are these: (1.) The great things said of *St. Peter* in the Scriptures and the Ancient Fathers. (2.) The great things said of the Church of *Rome* and the Bishops thereof. (3.) Communion with the Church of *Rome* being sometimes made the test of a Catholick. (4.) The frequent Appeals made to that Church and the Bishops thereof. (5.) The Antiquity and uninterrupted Succession of that Church.

Par. I believe you have done them right; These seem to contain the main of their strength; and I believe you are able to do them right too in the answering them.

Min.

Min. I must confels 'tis no hard matter for a Man to confute a witness that is not against him; for these are such. As for the (1.) The great things said of St. Peter in the Scriptures and the Ancient Fathers, viz. where he's call'd, *the Ambassador, Steward or Minister of Christ, a Rock on which the Church is founded, where the Keys of the Church are committed to him, and a power given him of binding and loosing, and where he's commanded to feed the flock; where he's stiled the Head; the Prince, the Captain, the President of the Apostles;* To this the Answer is ready and full; the same things said of him in Scripture, are therein said also of all the Apostles; And if not the same, yet as great things are said of the rest of the Apostles, by the Ancients, as of him: After all, we yield that these magnificent titles denote something of Honour peculiar to him, not a Supremacy, but a Primacy; not an Authority, but a Precedence: not a Dominion, but a Dignity.

2 Cor. 5. 20.
Eph. 2. 20.
Eph. 4. 11.

Par. As for the (2d.) The great things spoken of the Church of Rome and the Bishops thereof; viz. That She's the *Apostolick See, the Prerogative of the Apostles Chair, the Principal Church, and the more powerful Principality,* and the like, I will not trouble you for an Answer, I have heard it often given, and I think it satisfactory.

Min. I suppose you mean, because Rome was the Imperial Seat, and upon that account was that Church, and the Bishop of it in power, and riches and interest, in rank, and splendor, and dependences, much superior to all others.

Par. Yes, I mean that; and for the same reason, when the Seat of the Empire was translated to Constantinople, did that See set up to vie with the Roman, and

and had an equality of Honour conferr'd upon Her.

Min. There may yet be another reason given of it; viz. Because the *Roman* Church was founded by those two most eminent Apostles, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, (tho' neither the one nor the other, it may be, was formally Bishop of it) Now out of love and honour to their memories might the Ancients speak so many big and swelling things of the Church planted by them, and of its Bishops.

Par. I had gotten over this Stile pretty well without your help; but I think the (3d) particular is not so easy; Pray, Why was the Faith of the Church of *Rome* made the test of Catholicism, and Communion with that Church, of Catholics?

Min. Had you been never so little conversant in Church History, this would as little have puzz'd you as the other; 'Twas because the Church of *Rome* kept her self, for some considerable time longer, pure and untainted, whilst most of the Eastern Churches were more or less desil'd with Heresy: Here was the true solid Grain growing without the mixtures of the *Arian* Tares; and therefore to Her did the Fathers in their Disputes with Hereticks and Schismatics frequently Appeal, as a true *Catholick Church*, that still held the true Catholick Faith; But because she was once a chaste and undefil'd Church, does it follow that she must be always so? Most certainly the Church of *Rome* has been so chang'd and alter'd since, so diseas'd and deform'd, that she cannot be known to be her self.

Par. I think they lay a great stress upon the (4th) Head, The frequent Appeals that have been made to that Church.

Min.

Min. They have little reason so to do; for all the Appeals (till the after encroachments and usurpations of that See) that were made to the Pope, were not, as to a Governor set over all, who by his Authority could command justice to be done, (which the Fathers, and *St. Cyprian* particularly so often and zealously declaim against) but as to a Brother and a Friend of Innocence, that was most able to afford relief and succour to the injur'd and oppress'd: They did not Appeal to his Bar to right them, but sued to his kindness, to own them and their Cause. Of so great power and interest was the Bishop of that Church, by reason of his nearness to the Court, and his residence in that wealthy and populous City, that every one was ready to court him, and on every occasion to fly to his Patronage, knowing well, which side he took would go far to weigh down the ballance: But at first, whenever he thought fit to interpose, it was in the nature of a Friend, and not as a Judge; by way of Counsel and Advice, and not of Sentence and Judgment.

Par. The last Head you mention'd they cite the Fathers for, is the Antiquity and uninterrupted Succession of the Church of *Rome*; But I confess I am to seek how Succession and Antiquity can give Supremacy.

Min. So am I too; It's true, the Ancients in their Disputes with Schismatics, especially the *Donatists*, sometimes made use of this Argument against them, That they were but, as it were, of yesterday, and could derive no Succession from the Apostles; whereas the Orthodox Churches were of long standing, and they could trace their Bishops backward from one to another, till they came to the first Founder and Planter of them; and because the Church of *Rome* was, at the time

time of the *Donatists*, the most clear and uninterrupted in this point of Succession, they were wont to instance in Her particularly ; but supposing the Church of *Rome* was now the only Church that could shew a Succession, (as she is not, for the *Greek* Church and the *Brittish* Church can shew it as well as she) How does Succession prove the Pope's Supremacy ? or the want of it prove a Church, no Church ? May not a Man be acknowledg'd to be a true Son of *Adam*, tho' he cannot name all his progenitors that came berwixt ?

Par. It may be it is, because that Church is yet in being, and God has promis'd that his Church shall never fail.

Min. But because she is not yet destroyed, does it follow she never shall be ? It is an evident demonstration indeed of the wonderful patience and forbearance of God towards a very degenerate and deprav'd Church, but can be no Argument for the goodness of a Church, or for the perpetual duration of it.

Par. Sir, I think you have omitted one thing which they plead, and then I shall ease you of your trouble ; Some of the Fathers, *St. Cyprian* especially, stile the See of *Rome*, *The Chair of St. Peter*, and tell us, that that *Chair is but one, and from it sprang the unity of the Priesthood* ; How are these expressions to be understood ?

Min. I thank you for putting me in mind of it ; They are *Optatus's* words as well as *St. Cyprian's* ; and the true sense of them is this ; That as the Episcopal Office is but one, and the whole power of it put into the hands of every Bishop, so each Church had but one Bp. or one Episcopal Chair, the better to preserve Unity, and this was the original or fountain of Priesthood,

to

Opt. Mil.
1. 2. adv.
Parm.
Cypr. Ep.
55. ad *Cor-*
nel.

to all the Clergy within its jurisdiction; such was Rome the one Chair of St. Peter, tho' that Church was founded by St. Paul also, yet for unity sake, only one Episcopal Chair was set up, and one Episcopal Succession preserv'd, and from it the unity of the Priesthood was derived into all parts within that See or Patriarchate.

Par. I perceive you limit those words, from whom the unity of the Priesthood first began, to those places within the Bishop of Rome's Jurisdiction.

Min. Polidore Virgil does so; for, says he, it's very clear that Priesthood was very orderly appointed at Jerusalem, long before St. Peter came to Rome. The younger Sister may have the better fortune, become the more honourable, and take place of the Elder, but she cannot make her self born first, and of the longest standing. There being Churches compleatly formed, before the Roman was in being, she could not be the original of Priesthood to them; But by many Accidental advantages growing the greatest and the richest Church, she became the first too, and this Primacy of Honour and Dignity was at that time, and for that reason readily yielded to Her by the elder Churches. So that the Priesthood which is but one, may be said to begin first at Rome, for the same reason that the Roman is call'd the first Church, in regard of the dignity of it, as being the principal member of Christ's Church Catholick; but yet there may be a first amongst equals, and a Man may be above Thousands in honour and dignity, over whom he has no absolute command or power.

Lib. 4. de
Invent.
Rerum.

P A R T III.

Shewing that the Scriptures, and not the Church, are the Rule of Faith.

Par. **S**IR, I think your Discourse the other day made it very plain, That the Church of Rome is not the *Catholic Church*. Pray, What Church do the *Romanists* mean, when they say that the Church is the Rule of Faith?

Min. They mean their own particular Church, and call it the *Catholic*: But you have heard upon what grounds we deny it, and I am glad they appear'd clear and convincing to you.

Par. I fancy, if you will not allow their Church to be the *Catholic Church*, their Zeal will not be so hot for the Church's being the *Unerring Oracle of Truth*, and *Infallible Decider of Controversies*.

Min. I am of your mind; for in my Conscience, the Holy *Catholic Church* in all Ages, especially in the first, that were nearest the Fountain of Truth, and so could best discern truth from falshood, never held the same Faith and Doctrine that the Church of *Rome* does now.

Par. But taking the Church to be meant of the True *Catholic Church* of Christ; Is she to be admitted to be the Rule of Faith?

Min. No, We have, as we ought, a very great veneration for Her, and pay all due deference to her judgment, and are confirm'd in the Faith by the Testimony and Witness she bears to it; but the Rule she judg'd

judg'd by was, the Doctrine of Christ by Gods appointment committed to Writing, and that must be ours: And if not the *Catholick Church*, much less the Church of *Rome*, which I have shewn is but one part of it, and that a very corrupt part too.

Par. But this being the Foundation on which the whole Fabrick of their Religion is built, methinks they should be able to say a great deal for it.

Min. What that is, I shall endeavour to shew you, and at the same time shew you the weakness of it; But before we enter upon that, 'twill not be amiss that we fix the terms of the Question.

Par. If you please. But I think there is no great difficulty in that; By *Faith*, I suppose, is meant the Belief of the whole Christian Doctrine reveal'd by Christ to his Apostles, and by them deliver'd to us: And by *Rule*, that thing, whereby we know what is the Christian Doctrine, and what is not.

Min. You have express'd it well enough; Now this Rule, the *Reform'd* say, is the Scriptures only; *The Romanists*, the Church.

Par. How may the Scriptures be prov'd to be the compleat and only Rule of Faith?

Min. Indeed, 'tis so plain, it needs no proof; and I am sure you have no doubt of it. 'Tis manifest from their own testimony, and there are many collateral proofs besides. What did the Primitive Christians preserve with more care, than these Divine Writings? What did their Persecutors more industriously seek to destroy, than the *Bible*? What was reckon'd a clearer sign of a false Christian, than to deliver up this Book to be burnt? Did not Believers in those times count it a delivering up their Religion? Did they not brand

Traditores those with the odious name of Betrayers of their Religion, that did it? Have not the Doctors of the Church in all Ages appeal'd to this for the Truth of their Doctrine? Have they not, with this *Sword of the Spirit*, encountred all the Errors and Heresies that sprung up in the Church? And did they not ever account it a main part of their Office and Function to expound and apply it to the people? All which put together, seem to be a clear and full evidence, That the Scriptures contain in them the full Will of God concerning the Salvation of Man.

Par. But these you said were not the main Arguments, but only, like so many supernumerary Auxiliaries, of which there were no need. You were mentioning some others?

Min. I was so; And they are taken from the Scriptures themselves, and the joint concurrent testimony of the *Catholick Church*.

Par. I think, tho' the *Papists* will not grant the Scriptures to contain the whole Will of God, yet they own them to be the Word of God; and therefore an Argument from thence will be of as great force to them as to us.

Min. It ought to be so; And can any thing be clearer than these two Texts to this purpose; *Joh. 20. 30, 31.* These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name. *2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17.* And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that

that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Par. These are very plain, and nothing needed to be said after them; but because they boast so much of Antiquity and Tradition, you may please to shew what they speak for us in this point.

Min. You must not expect that I should produce all the Testimonies of the Ancients to this purpose. Many of our Learned men have done it to my hand; and I wish you'd give me leave to refer you to two great men indeed, who have done this work thoroughly, and beyond contradiction: Dr. Tillot, *Rule of Faith*, Part 4. Sect. 2. and Dr. Stillingfleet, *Rational Account*, Part 1. Chap. 11. p. 261.

Par. However you may please to give a taste of one or two.

Min. I will then; and they shall be of those who liv'd near, or not far remote from the Apostles times; And we shall find all of them fix on the Scripture, and not one mention the Infallible Testimony of the Church; much less the *Roman*, as the only ground whereinto Faith is to be resolv'd: *Irenaeus* tells us, That the Scriptures are perfect, as spoken from the Word of God and his Spirit; and that they are the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith. *Tertullian*, writing against *Hermogenes* the Heretick, who asserted that all things at the beginning were made of some subject matter, hath these words, *Let those of Hermogenes his Shop shew that it is written: If it be not written, let them fear that woe which is allotted to such as add or take away.* And in the same place makes this profession for himself, *I adore the fulness of the Scripture.* *St. Basil* is also full to this purpose, *It is a manifest fall-*

Lib. 2. c.
47. l. 3. c.
1.

Tertullian
ad *Perpetuam*
c. 22.

Adoro
Scripturæ
plenitudi-
nem,
ing

Basil. del. ing from the Faith, saith he, either to reject any of those
uicior. points that are written, or to bring in any of those things
tom. 2. that are not written. St. Gregory Nyssen, In that only
Greg. N. the Truth must be acknowledged, wherein the Seal of the
de An. & the Truth must be acknowledged, wherein the Seal of the
Refu. tom. Scripture Testimony is to be seen. Clemens Alexandrinus
2. p. 639. calls the consent of the Old and New Testament, The
Cl. Alex. Ecclesiastical Canon, and the Touchstone of True and False.
Strom. 2. St. Chrysostome, The most exact Balance, Square and Rule
St. Chrys. of Divine Verity. Vincentius Lirinensis, saith, That
Hom. 13. the Canon or Rule of Scripture is perfect, abundantly suf-
in 2. Ep. ficient in it self for all things; yea, more than sufficient,
ad Cor. These may suffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-
Vin. Liv. fersuffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-
fatisuper- fersuffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-
que suffi- fersuffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-
ciat. Cont. fersuffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-
hazr. c. 2. fersuffice, as you desir'd, for a tast; I have re-

Par. I see plainly both Scripture and Antiquity give it for the Written Word to be the Rule of Faith; Pray, upon what account do the *Papists* attribute it to the Church?

Min. Upon this twofold Account; both as, they pretend, she is the only safe *Repository* and *Conservator* of certain unwritten Traditions concerning this Faith, and the only sure and *Infalible Interpreter* of those that are written.

Par. Do they wholly exclude the Scriptures?

Min. No, not in words, but in effect they do; They make it but an obscure part of the Rule; Tradition is to supply its deficiency, and the Interpretation of the Church, its obscurity.

Par. What do they mean by their unwritten Traditions?

Min. Certain Doctrines and Articles of Faith deliver'd by Christ and his Apostles, that were never committed to writing, but left in the Custody of the Church,
to

Regula fi-
dei non to-
talit sed
partialit.
Beil. lib. 4.
c. 12. de
verbo non
Scripto.

to be transmitted to Posterity by word of Mouth ; And these, the Council of *Trent* ordains to be receiv'd <sup>Seff. 4.
decr. 1.</sup> with the same Religious reverence and affection, as we do the Scriptures themselves.

Par. But does not the Apostle exhort the *Thessalonians*, to hold the Traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or writing, 1 *Thess.* 2.15 ?

Min. The Scriptures then might not be all written, the Apostles being all or many of them living: *St. Paul* had taught the *Thessalonians* before, many necessary Truths, which he did not mention in this Epistle ; but they being sure that all proceeded from the same Infallible Spirit that was in him, the one was equally to be held fast, and adher'd to with the other : The whole Christian Doctrine, when first Preach'd by our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles, was unwritten ; some parts of it were written before others, and some Churches had them before others ; but it was not long before the whole was compleatly written and deliver'd to all.

Par. It seems indeed, Had not God been pleas'd to have order'd the whole Christian Doctrine to be put into Writing, we should not at this distance have been at so great a certainty, what is Gospel, and what not.

Min. At so great a certainty, say you ? We should have been at a great loss, and the whole Doctrine of the Gospel endanger'd by multitudes of Novelties and pretended Apostolical Traditions. The Devil very early put men upon this Trade, first to broach new Doctrines, and then (to gain credit and reputation to them) to entitle them to some Apostolical Man or other, that were contemporaries with the Apostles, or liv'd not long after them.

Par.

Par. Can you produce any Instances of this kind? Did this way of corrupting the Faith begin so soon?

Min. Yes truly, The Apostles were scarce cold in their Graves, when another Doctrine, than what they Preach'd, was publish'd and father'd upon them; and had not the *true* been committed to Writing, in all likelihood, without the extraordinary Mercy of God, it had long before now been lost and buried under heaps of Traditionary Forgeries: How soon did the *Milkenary* Opinion spring up? how fast did it grow and spread, and how long continue? *Papias* affirming he had it from those who convers'd with the Apostles; What a mighty difference was there betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches about the time of keeping of *Easter*, whilst each pretended an Apostolical Tradition for their own Custom? Others there were about the time our Saviour lived, and about the time of his publick Ministry; but these are enough to shew, That if Unwritten Doctrines were so soon after the Apostles death laid at their doors, that were none of theirs, what little credit and trust is to be given to those that have been invented since, even in these latter Ages, and attributed to them?

Par. But do the Reform'd reject all Traditions whatsoever?

Min. No. All the most Learned of the Reform'd, and particularly those of the Church of *England*, have a great veneration for what is truly Primitive and Ancient, and held by the *Catholick Church* in the first Ages; whether they be expositions of Scripture, Symbols of Faith, Devotional Hymns, Forms of Prayer, or Decrees of Councils that were free and Oecumenical, for the ending of Controversies in matters of Faith,

Faith, or Establishing Rites and Ceremonies for the more decent and orderly management of Ecclesiastical affairs.

Par. I suppose every thing, that by evident reason may be drawn from Scripture, tho' not express'd in it, that's not contrary to it, and what neither in its nature nor consequence tends to corrupt the true Catholick Faith.

Min. Yes, every Tradition of that nature; and there is great reason we should have respect to such; for when we see how the Fathers expounded Scripture at the beginning, and what were the Articles of their Faith, it cannot but be a great strengthening and confirmation of ours; and the Orders and Canons left by them, are so many helps and directions to Governors in succeeding Ages, what they may, and what they ought to do to preserve the Faith and the Unity of the Church.

Par. I perceive you limit the Traditions you allow of, to those of the whole *Catholick Church*, and especially to that in the first Ages.

Min. I do so, and those we contend for more earnestly than the *Romanists* do; they confirm us in many of our own Doctrines, which, tho' they may be gathered out of Scripture, yet are not laid down there in so many words; such as Infant-Baptism and the Divine Right of Episcopal Authority above *Presbyters*; and they confirm us against many of the Church of *Rome's*, which, as they have no Foundation in Scripture, so have not the least countenance from Primitive Traditions, as, I think, was made evident at our last meeting, in the point of the Pope's Supremacy.

Par. Are all others then to be suspected, whether their Authors be private Doctors or particular Churches ?

Min. Yes, to be suspected, but not presently to be condemn'd without Examination ; so far as their Traditions agree with the Written Word, and those of the *Catholick Church*, we approve of them ; but then 'tis not for any virtue derived on them from the Authority of their respective Authors, but for their own sake, and the sake of the Scriptures to which they are conformable ; but if they have not the Ancient Catholick Stamp and Image upon them, they are to be disown'd as Illegitimate, and to be cast out ; and of this sort seem to be those additional *Trent-Doctrines*, invented by particular men to serve a turn, to promote the Interests of that Church, and then Espous'd and Adopted by the Church as Catholick, and imposed on the World in a blind undiscerning Age as such.

Par. This seems to be a severe charge, but I suppose you speak not without grounds.

Min. You may be sure of it ; for they are certainly such as contradict the Scriptures, which they own to be the word of God equally with their Traditions ; and therefore both cannot be true ; the Christian Verity is but one, and cannot be contrary to it self ; either the Scriptures or their Traditions are mistaken, and must be rejected.

Par. But, they say, we take the Scriptures upon the credit of the *Roman Church*, and why then do we so clamorously cry down their Traditions ; may they not be believed in one thing as well as another ?

Min.

Min. That's a very great mistake ; 'tis upon the Credit of the whole Church of Christ, that we receive and embrace them, whereof the *Roman* Church is but a part ; they were committed at first to every particular Church in the World to be carefully preserv'd, that they might neither be corrupted nor lost ; and we have the suffrage of all and every one of them for the Canon of it ; unless we can think that all the Churches in the World could conspire to impose upon us, we are safe ; and upon confidence they did not, we receive them : let them shew us the same concurrent Testimony of the *Catholick Church* for their Traditions, and we'll receive them too.

Par. 'Twas then the *Catholick Church* that made the Canon of Scripture.

Min. You must take me right. 'Tis not the Authority of the Church that gives the Scripture its Authority, but the Divine and inspired Authority whence they proceeded ; knowing them to have been indited by the Holy Spirit in Christ and his Apostles, and finding by comparing the several Copies lodg'd in the keeping of the several Churches, how exactly they did answer to, and agree with one another, she declar'd them to be Canonical, and bore witness to their Divine authority.

Par. However the Church of *Rome* was one that gave in her Testimony for the Canon of the Scripture.

Min. Yes, but, we have reason to bless God, she was not the only one that was the Keeper of the Divine Writings ; she has so corrupted them since, men would have been apt to have suspected, she had forg'd them at first ; she has not only added many A-

pocryphal Books to the Holy Canon, but so abused the Canonical, that we must cease to wonder at their Religion being different from ours, since their Bible is not the same.

Par. I hope you do not speak this without Book; one would be sure of it before he lays so great a crime to their charge.

Min. You shall judg of it your self; in *Gen.* 3. 15, that they might force the Text to give some countenance to that extravagant Honour and Worship they pay to the Blessed Virgin, instead of *that* or *he*, they Translate *she shall break thy head.* Learned men well know how full of Errors the vulgar *Latin* Edition is, and yet the *Trent-Council* made it the only Authentick one, and some of that Communion prise it above the Original; who can compare the two Bibles put out by those two Popes not long after one another, Pope *Sixtus* the 5th, and Pope *Clement* the 8th, each duly

Dr. Jam.
Bell. Papal.

Authoriz'd by each Pope, with a curse to every one that should use any other, and not perceive the many corruptions of both, and the palpable contradictions in each to one another.

Par. I did not know before, that they had thus serv'd the Bible, but I have often heard how bold they have made with the Writings of the Fathers; a late ingenious Author hath told us what they have done to *St. Chrysostom's* Epist. to *Cæsarius* for being against their Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*.

Min. It's very true, Some of the *Serbonn* Doctors cut it out of the *Greek* Edition of *Palladius*, published by *Monfieur Bigot*, 1680. The very original Leaves, as they were ras'd out, are in the hands of a Learned man I could name to you. I must not stay to shew you,

you, what spurious Treatises have been compos'd by them, and father'd upon men of Name and Antiquity; How they have put the genuine works of many of the Fathers into the Inquisition, and rack'd and tortur'd them to speak on their side. How in some places Sentences have been foisted in; in others, Passages left out, Words chang'd, and Points alter'd, and all to establish and spread the Papal Pride and Usurpation: Instances of every particular hereof, more than a few, are to be found in Dr. James's learned Treatise of the *Corruption of Scripture, Fathers and Councils*.

Par. I have heard that Book often mention'd, but never saw it; Pray, Is it in English? And what's the design of it?

Min. It is in English, and a very useful Book: He gives us an account of no less than 187 Treatises that have been forg'd by *Papists*, and scatter'd abroad under the names of the Ancient Fathers; turns us to no less than 50 places of the True Fathers that have been corrupted by them; shews us the infinite wrong their *Indices Expurgatorii* have done to innumerable Authors both Ancient and Modern, not sparing the very *Bible* it self.

Par. I think you have made it very evident, That the Church, upon the account of her Traditions, is not the Rule of Faith; and truly after all the noise the Church of *Rome* makes about them, she does not, as I have been told, think fit to stick to it her self.

Min. It's true, there have been so many clashes and fallings out betwixt their Apostolical Traditions, that to keep peace amongst them, they are forc'd to fly to the judgment of the present Church, to determine which is the true Child, and which the counterfeit. . *Dipping
the*

St. Jerom
in 1st as. c.
6. 8.
Gratian.
de Con-
secr. dist. 2.
cap. 2.

the person three times in Baptism, in signification of the Blessed Trinity, Giving the Eucharist to Infants, Administring Baptism only at Easter and Whitsuntide, were once esteemed Ancient and Apostolical Traditions; now in as little use amongst them, as amongst us. The Epistle to the *Hebrews* for near 400 years together was rejected by them, tho' now for a much longer time it has been receiv'd as Canonical. Pope *Gelasius* call'd it a Grand Sacriledg to deny the Cup to the Laity; The Council of *Trent* now Anathematizes those that hold it necessary: Pope *Gregory* condemn'd the Title of *Univerfal Pastor* as Antichristian; Pope *Boniface* the 3^d as greedily catcht at it, and all his Successors glory in it, as the top and flower of the Papal Dignity.

Par. Then they do with their Traditions as they do with the Scriptures, put what sense they please upon them, and neither the one nor the other signifies any thing, till the Church has first Catechiz'd them, and taught them what to say.

Min. 'Tis just so; When all is done; tho' for the better grace of the thing, they may pretend great regard to Scripture and Tradition in what they hold for Articles of Faith; the Definition of the Church, which they must have Infallible, is with them the only and whole Rule, and all their Faith is built on that Foundation.

Par. What do they mean by the Church, to which they attribute such an Infallible Spirit? In what part of the Church do they place it?

Min. Truly, you must not expect that I should tell you this, for they cannot tell themselves; sometimes 'tis in the Church Virtual, the Pope, the visible head of it; sometimes in the Church Representative, a General Council; sometimes in both, a Council with the Pope pre-

presiding in it. The truth is, 'tis with the Pope and a General Council, *catch as catch can*; sometimes the one, and sometimes the other has been uppermost, according as the Pope's Power and Interest was in the full or wane: The Council of *Constance* decreed in favour of a General Council, the Council of *Lateran*, in favour of the Pope; both have had their turns, and both have their parties and abettors.

Par. Were I a *Romanist*, I should be for the Pope; I desire to be excused from naming all my Reasons; But why should not this be thought a good one? Is it not reasonable to lodge the Infallibility where they fix the Supremacy? For his Holiness cannot but know that his Supremacy is clipt, whilst the judgment of one or many together, is to be taken and prefer'd before his.

Min. There is something in what you say; but so many Popes have been such ignorant and lewd persons, some guilty of Heresy, some of Atheism, some of Debauchery, as might be instanc'd in *Liberius*, *Vigilius*, *Honorius*, *Adrian*, *Hildebrand*, and others; that all of them have not the face to say, Popes cannot err, who have actually err'd in a very high degree so often; They have therefore compounded the matter, especially their late Authors, and have plac'd it in the Definitions and Decrees of a General Council, confirm'd and ratified by the Pope.

Par. But have not General Councils contradicted one another as well as Popes?

Min. They must confess this too; The 7th General Council of *Constantinople*, held in the year of our Lord 755, and in the 13th year of *Constantine Copronimus*, whereat were present 338 Bishops, condemn'd the use of Images in Churches on any account whatsoever.

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as a Custom borrow'd from the Pagans, justifies her Decree both from Scripture, Reason, and Ancient Fathers, amongst whom, *Eusebius Pamphili's* Epistle to *Constantia* the Empress, desiring the Image of Christ to be sent her, is most worthy our notice and observation. *What Image of Christ do you mean? Of his Divine Nature? That cannot be had: As no Man knoweth the Father but the Son, so no Man knoweth the Son but the Father. Of his Human Nature? Understand, That the Splendor and shining brightness of his glorified Body, cannot be represented with dead Colours and shining Pictures.* But the second Council of *Nice*, about 33 years after, In the 8th year of the Reign of *Irene* and her Son *Constantine*, consisting of 350 Bps. with as much zeal determin'd for *Images*, not only that they should be receiv'd into Churches, but be *adored and worshipped* there. To this Council did *Adrian* Bp. of *Rome* send an Epistle, approving the *Worship of Images*; and several Bps. that had condemn'd them in the Council of *Constantinople*, here recanted their Opinion, and beg'd pardon.

Par. I remember you shewed me before, how the Decrees of the Council of *Constance* and *Lateran* were at Sword-pike with one another, in the point of *Supremacy*.

Min. I did so; and I was going on to shew you a farther repugnancy of one Council to another, in the point of *Image-worship*; The great Council at *Frankford*, held under *Charles* the Great, King of *France*, in the year of our Lord 794, seconded that of *Constantinople* against *Images*, and that too, in spite of Pope *Adrian's* Ambassadors, whom he sent on purpose to defend them; But the Council comparing the Acts of the Council of *Constantinople* and *Nice* together, went a middle way, and

and whilst it allow'd Images and Pictures in Churches for Decency and Ornament, - it strictly forbid all Worship and Veneration of them as impious, and against the Law of God. In this Council all the Arguments brought by the 2d Council of *Nice* for the Adoration of Images, are fully refuted, and *Epiphanius's* Epistle to *John Bp. of Jerusalem*, disallowing the very bringing in of Images into Churches, was recited; but whatever was said and urg'd therein against them, the *Trent-Fathers* when they came, over-rul'd all, and the Council of *Frankford* did not pull them down with more reason than that Council set them up again with violence, denouncing an Anathema against all that dare refuse to pay Worship and Veneration to them.

Par. Where must the Infallibility be now? Methinks they should be asham'd to pretend to it.

Min. They beg your pardon for that; as a great man hath worded it, *They are sure they have it, tho' they know not where to find it.*

Par. Pray, Sir, since they will not let this Doctrine go, what do they alledg in behalf of it?

Min. They force many places of Scripture to speak in its cause; they pretend an absolute necessity for it for many good purposes, viz. in order to the finding out the true sense of Scripture, to the preserving peace and unity, and to the preventing schisms and divisions, errors and heresies in the Church.

Par. I remember, they cite all those places for it, where a power is said to be given to the Church to forgive sins, where the Ministers of the Gospel are call'd *God's Husbandmen, Labourers, Building*, are said to have the mind of *Christ*.

Min. But he must have a piercing eye that can discern the Infallibility of the Church in these Texts; but suppose it might be proved from hence, what reason has the Church of *Rome* to Engross and Monopolize them to her self?

Par. It's obvious that they are spoke in general, and so concern one part of the Church as well as another; but I suppose they have other Texts in store, that seem to be more express and particular to their purpose.

Min. They often mention *Mat. 16. 18.* where Christ says to St. Peter, *The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church;* But this Text, I before shew'd you, concerns the Church in general; and tho' God hath promised hereby that his Church shall never fail on Earth, yet those words do not name the way and means; and God can do it without the help of an Infallible Guide on Earth.

Par. I remember another they make use of; 'tis our Saviour's words to the Apostles, *Matt. 28. 20. I am with you always to the end of the World.*

Min. This promise being made to the Apostles successors as well as to the Apostles, cannot be interpreted so secure to them an Infallibility, but only a general assistance in the discharge of their Duty and Office; for then all the Apostles Successors had been Infallible, by virtue of it, as well as themselves; and the Government of the Church of *Sardis* been preserv'd from error, who yet is blam'd for *letting go what he had received and beard,* *Rev. 3. 1, 2, 3.*

Par. I will not trouble you to name the rest, unless there is more difficulty to understand the sense of them, than of these.

Min.

Min. Only one more; if you please, because by the sound of the words it seems to be a little on their side. 'Tis in 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. where the Church is called the pillar and ground of Truth. But now this, you must know, was spoken of the Church of *Ephesus* that hath long since, as many other Churches have done, sinn'd away Gods Protection, and is come to ruine; the meaning of the words, not shewing what a Church is in her Nature and Constitution, but what is incumbent on her as her duty, viz. To be the great Preserver and Propagator of the Christian Truth, like a Pillar with a writing fixt on it, that's visible to all that pass by it. It shews not what a Church is, but what she ought to be, and is to be Interpreted like those Texts in *Mal.* 2. 7. *The Priests lips should preserve knowledg, and they should seek the law at his mouth.* That is, he should do so, if he does his duty; but how often does he fail therein, and the truth suffer by it? for so it follows, *but ye are departed out of the way, ye have made many to stumble.* *Prov.* 16. 10. *A divine sentence is in the lips of the King, his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.* That is, it should be so, but they will not say 'tis always so, unless they think Kings to be Infalible too..

Par. I perceive Scripture will do them but little service; I would be glad to see whether they can have any better luck with the reasons they pretend to.

Min. They tell us they have many, and those Unanswerable, if you'll believe them; for without this Infalible Guide, we can have no true sense of Scripture, nor certainty of Faith.

Par. I mistrusted they had not much to say, when I heard you mention they talkt so big. If these be their

strong Arguments, I do not despair of an Answer.

Min. You need not; it's ready at hand, and what the meanest Capacity may be able to give: Are not all things necessary to Salvation plainly set down in Scripture? Does not the Scripture contain the duty of all? And was not God able, or was he unwilling so to express it, as all should be capable to understand it? Are not private men commanded *to read, to search the Scriptures, to prove all things, to try the Spirits*, Men and Doctrines, that pretend to be inspir'd, by the Scriptures? And must they not first understand the sense of Scriptures before they can measure and judge of any thing by them? Did Christ and his Apostles Preach so as not to be understood by their Hearers? Could they not Write as intelligibly as they Preach'd, especially since they wrote the same things and almost in the same form of words? May not single persons come to the meaning and sense of Scripture by the same way as the Church does? Has not God Imprinted on Mens minds such Natural notions of himself, and of good and evil, according to which all Revelation is to be interpreted? Has he not given to all, reason to discern and judge? May not Men be skil'd in the Original, understand the propriety of the phrase, find out the design and scope of the Text, have the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and must not the Church go the same way? After all, may they not as well understand the Laws of God, as the Definitions and Decrees of a Pope or Council?

Par. But the Church pretends to something farther and beyond all this; To immediate Inspiration, and Divine Illumination.

Min.

Min. The best of it is, she must give us something more than her bare word, before we believe her: Can she prove her extraordinary Spirit by extraordinary works, or a voice from Heaven? Is not all Enthusiasm and Quakerism founded on this Principle? Does not this wholly supersede the necessity of Scripture at all, since God can as easily reveal his mind to the Church by inspiration without Scripture, as the sense and meaning of the Scriptures?

Par. Certainly this is enough to convince any reasonable Man, That the true sense and meaning of the Scripture may be learn'd without such an Interpreter; That a Man's own Reason, assisted by the help of his spiritual Guides, consulting the sense of the Primitive Church, is the best and safest, and a direct way to a right understanding of Scripture.

Min. Yet there is one thing more that I have not mention'd; If I cannot find out the sense of Scripture without this Infallible Interpreter, *the Church*, How shall I know what the Church is? and that the Church is such an Infallible Interpreter? If you send me to be inform'd by the Scriptures, I cannot understand them till the Church has interpreted them to me; If you send me to reason and discourse, and such other ordinary means whereby other things come to be known; By the same way I may find out as well the sense of Scripture, as who is the Interpreter of them.

Par. I remember they direct us to the Scripture to find out the Church; and to the Church to find out the sense of Scripture.

Min. Is not this to dance in a Circle, and to prove nothing: a Sophism that may make mens Brains turn round, but not inform their Minds? If the Scripture must

must be known *before* the Church, and the Church *before* the Scripture, neither one nor the other can be known, because they cannot be both *first*; unless we'll make them both to be the same thing, as the Church of *Rome* in effect does (who will have the Scripture to have no other sense than the Church puts upon it) and then all the proof amounts only to this, *The Church bears witness to her self*. For to say the Scriptures interpreted by the Infallible Church, declares the Church to be the Infallible Interpreter of Scripture, is no more than to say, The Infallible Church says she is Infallible; you must take it on her word: But you know what our Saviour said in a Case not unlike to this, *If I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true*.

Par. But they say, as I am inform'd, that we must use our reason to discover our Guide; but when that is once found out, we are to give up our reason and all to be wholly guided by him.

Guid. in
Contr. pr.
p. 3. R.H.

Min. They are forc'd to allow this; for in their attempts to make a profelyte to their Church, they set before him Reasons and Arguments to move him to it, and that supposes he has both an ability and a right to judge of those motives, whether they be convincing or no. And has he a right to judge of the Church, and not of its Doctrine? Or can he otherwise make a true judgment concerning the Church, than by judging first of the particular Doctrines it holds? If it is an Orthodox Faith that makes an Orthodox Church, the Faith the Church professes ought to be examin'd before the Church is made choice of: But it seems a Man must use his Eyes and Reason once for all: afterwards he has no need of either; he must see by others eyes, and judge by others understandings: But certainly a Man must quite

quite lose his Reason, before he can so wholly abandon himself to anothers guidance. I may, and ought to consult my Spiritual Guide and Teacher; but I must know him well first, and be assured both of his skill and honesty, before I leave my self out, and wholly cast my self upon him; every man desires to walk safely, and he's the most likely to do it who sees where he goes.

Par. You'l be pleas'd to give me leave to mention every thing that I can recall, that they urge in their behalf; They tell us, that there are many things in Scripture hard to be understood; and many Disputes and Controversies oftentimes arise about the sense of it; That all Sects and Parties cite Scripture, and pretend it is on their side; Must then every Man follow his own private judgment; and Interpret Scripture according to his own fancy?

Min. No, The Church of *England* is far from allowing that; She advises us to compare one Scripture with another, to explain the more hard by the more easie, and so to prove what the sense of Scripture is, from Scripture it self; She sends us in her Articles and Canons to consult the *Catholick Church* in the first Ages, who are the best Witnesses what is Truth and what is not. The Apostles, as it should seem, very early drew up, and agreed upon a short Summary of Faith for the use of the Church, and each sent it to be carefully preserv'd and maintain'd by the several Churches of his own Plantation; This is call'd in Scripture, *The form of sound words, the proportion of Faith, the Depositum,* or thing committed to *Timothy's* trust; accordingly in after Ages, when any Dispute arose in the Church, concerning the sense of Scripture, or an Article of Faith, each Church was sent to, to give an account, what

2 Tim. 1.

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Rom. 12.

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1 Tim. 6.

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what was its belief and sense in that particular, and what they all agreed on, could not be look'd upon otherwise than the Truth, than according to that Faith the Apostles had taught and committed to their charge.

Par. So I have read it was in the first memorable Council of *Nice*; when the Heresy of *Arius*, denying the Divinity of Christ, was debated by the Fathers, and a dispute arose concerning the sense of that Text in *St. John*, *I and my Father are one*; each Father was to bring in the sense of that Church over which he presided, and all agreeing that the Text was to be understood of the Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, 'twas presently so determin'd, and *Arius* and his Doctrine condemn'd.

Min. But you must here remember, as you go, That when we have recourse to the *Catholick Church* for the sense of Scripture, we appeal to it, not as to an Infallible Interpreter, but as to a most credible Witness of the Apostolical Doctrine. We build not our Faith on the Authority of the Ancient Fathers, but on that very thing they built theirs, the Authority of the Inspired Writings; only we are much strengthen'd and confirm'd in ours by the exact agreement it bears with theirs.

Par. Ought we not also to pay a due respect and submission to that particular Church, under whose care and government the Divine Providence hath cast us?

Min. Yes, and to obey her in all things relating to the Order and outward Polity of it, and in matters of Faith, to follow her as far as she agrees with the Scripture and *Catholick Church*; and wherein we are convinc'd she does not so, not to set up a Church against her, to be humbly silent, and modestly dissenting, unless in points fundamental, following the Apostle's Rule,

Hast

Haſt thou Faith, have it to thy ſelf. Had not every Church a right to make its own Rules and Orders for decency, and upon the breaking out of any difference, to interpoſe its Authority, for the cloſing of it, it would be very deficient in its Conſtitution, as wanting power to ſecure its unity, and conſequently both its being and well-being.

Par. Sir, I have not many things more to ſtart; They ſometimes tell us, that it's inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God, as the great Law-giver of his Church, to leave things thus at random and in confuſion, and no better to provide for its peace and unity, than to ſuffer every man to judge as he will, and believe as he liſt.

Min. All this is to pretend to be wiſer than God; Does not God know how to govern his Church without their direction? Is it not more ſuitable to the nature of Man, to be left to the uſe of his reaſon and judgment in his actions, than to be under an Infallible Dictator, that hampers, as it were, his faculties, and leaves no place for deliberation and choice? Is there any virtue in believing, where all the difficulty is not to believe, as it happens when the Judge is Infallible? Is not Peace and Concord very deſirable in the State, as well as in the Church? and muſt God be cenſur'd for an imprudent Governor, becauſe he has not taken ſufficient care of that too, by an Univerſal Infallible Judge in Civil Matters? Is it not as abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, that we ſhould be Holy as well as Orthodox? And muſt the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God be call'd in queſtion, becauſe he has not provided a never-failing means to keep men from ſin, as is pretended he has done to keep men from error? To reſtrain their wills, as to direct their judgments?

Par. They say again, Do we not see, how, for not owning the *Infallible Church*, and leaving every Man to interpret Scripture for himself, Schisms and Heresies, and Divisions swarm amongst us? What distractions in Religion? what endless Controversies in the Church?

Min. This may be true. But will an Infallible Judg help the matter? All things necessary in Religion are so plain, that no Infallible Judg can make them plainer; his Interpretation can't be plainer than the Text. I need ask none but my self, what it is *to love God?* and *to believe in Christ?* And for Controversies in lesser matters, they are of so little consequence to Religion, that they may as well be born withal by mutual charity amongst Christians, as ended by peremptory Decrees and Decisions by an Infallible Authority. But Sects and Divisions, God knows, there are too many among us; But could an Infallible Judg be able to silence and put an end to all?

Par. So they pretend. But I read, that in the Apostles days, tho' they had the Infallible assistance of God's Holy Spirit, *to lead them into all Truth*, there were *Schisms and Divisions* in the Church.

Min. It's well observ'd, there were so; and if so great a measure of the Divine Spirit could not do it then, How can we imagine that the meer shadow and dream of Infallibility should do it now? Have the *Romanists* themselves found so great benefit by it, that they can upon experience with any assurance recommend it to us?

Par. I have heard indeed, that there are as many and as fierce Disputes and Controversies amongst them, as amongst us?

Min. You were not misinform'd; The Disputes betwixt the *Franciscans* and *Dominicans*, the *Jansenists* and the

the *Molinists*, are not yet put an end to ; and many others might be named. As we are not agreed with them that there is such an Infallible Guide, so are they as little agreed amongst themselves, who it is. Now we say, *Physician heal thy self.*

Par. However I am afraid, these multitudes of opinions and Sects that are amongst us, do a great deal of hurt to Religion ; it is apt to make some men think there is none, because there are so many ; and every man uncertain of his own.

Min. It may be so, but there is no reason it should ; if I must question the truth of every thing that others deny or doubt of, I must not believe my own eyes ; for there have been those that have denied there was any such thing as motion ; and there are those that deny bread to be bread ; then the *Romanists* cannot be certain that their Church is Infallible, for all the rest of mankind deny it. If by a sober and modest use of my reason, and those Ministerial assistances Christ hath afforded me in his Church, I may certainly know the true sense of Scripture, I may also certainly know what is the true Religion, for this depends upon the other ; but does it follow, because others have neglected the means, and are of no Religion, that I must not believe mine ?

Par. I see plainly, an Infallible Judge, were there one, could not prevent errors and heresies from springing up ; pray, why does God permit them in his Church ?

Min. St. Paul gives one reason of it ; there must be heresies or divisions in the Church, that they which are approved, might be made manifest ; and God who can bring good out of evil, can turn them several ways to his Churches good and advantage. They afford an occasion, that the true Faith is the better explain'd and confirm'd

to

1 Cor. 11.
19.

to us; they put men upon enquiry, and the more diligently any man examines, the more clearly he discerns, and the more stedfastly he believes afterwards. To this we owe many excellent writings of the ancient Fathers, the errors and heresies that arose in their days concerning the Divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, were the occasion that we have those Doctrines so clearly stated, and fully explain'd to us.

Par. Sir, you have abundantly satisfied me as to this point. I ask but one question more; Since the Christian Doctrine more strictly than ever any before, binds all its professors to unity and love and peace; how come so many disputes and dissensions and animosities to arise amongst them?

Min. They proceed from whence all other evils come, from mens lusts and passions. That which makes some men to be of no Religion, makes others of any, and as occasion serves, of many. They have a lust to gratify, or an interest to serve, and they'l be of that Sect that can best comply, or best pay them for it. I need not tell you from what root most of the *Romish* errors and superstitions grow; and because the name of Scripture is venerable, and carries authority with it, that many times is prest into the service, and by an unnatural construction forc'd to bear witness against it self. So long as there is Vice in the World, there will be Error; no Church or Religious Society can be wholly exempt from either; that's the best and the purest, that has the fewest of both.

F I N I S.

Impressat.

May 11 1888

In Reply.
